

as part of the treatment of these taxa. The illustrations appear to depict accurately the diagnostic morphological criteria of each series, and the drawings—usually opposite the descriptive material of a given species—are relatively large and are not crowded on the plates. These illustrations have come from several sources and are therefore not always uniform as to style of labeling. This esthetic consideration, however, in no way detracts from their scientific accuracy or usefulness. The heavy paper cover is quite attractive and would suffice unless the book got extended use as a field manual. Even so, the volumes could be rebound and still cost much less than other floras of this type. It is hoped that this series will start a trend to take such illustrated floras out of the class of “collectors items” and put them in the hands of the interested people who need them. C. RITCHIE BELL, Botany Department, University of California, Berkeley.

*Downs and Dunes, Their Plant Life and Its Environment.* By SIR EDWARD SALISBURY. xiv + 328 pp., 100 figs., 32 plates. 1952. G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., London. 45 s. net.

“Downs and Dunes” is an elaborately detailed account of the vegetation of the chalk downs, limestones, and sand dunes of Great Britain. Floristics and ecology are included as well as some of the dynamics of plant geography. The book is written in a very readable style, here discussing the situation in nature solely from observational evidence and there discussing a fact documented by experiment, thus reflecting an enormous amount of careful observation and investigation. It is copiously illustrated with beautiful photographs and line drawings. In all, down to the abundant ecological notes on individual species, it is a very informative work.

Although nowhere does the author so state them, conclusions as to geographic affinity seem to assume an overworked concept of unity in floristic origins that does not emphasize any coincidence in ecological requirements. One fails to grasp any other meaning or purpose to such items as geographic elements (“Mediterranean element”) or components (“oceanic component”).

Since the words “downs” and “dunes” come from exactly the same etymological root, the American reader not at home with the word “down” would have liked to have had a clearer presentation of the geographical or ecological connotation of “downs versus dunes.” One pieces together that the downs are on chalk that is almost pure calcium carbonate and the dunes are of sand largely of mixed calcareous and siliceous origin. —HERBERT L. MASON, Department of Botany, University of California, Berkeley.